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LETTER DATED 17 JANUARY 1991 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

In accordance with paragraph 4 of resolution 678 (1990), I wish, on behalf of my Government, to submit the following report on the actions undertaken pursuant to paragraphs 2 and 3 of that resolution.

On 10 August 1990, the United States reported to the President of the Council that, in the exercise of the inherent right of individual and collective self-defence, it had deployed military forces to the Persian Gulf region in response to requests from Governments in the region, including Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Since that time, the military forces of the United States have joined with those of other States co-operating with the Government of Kuwait in accordance with resolution 665 for the purpose of implementing the sanctions imposed by resolution 661 (1990). On 29 November 1990, the Council adopted resolution 678 (1990), in which it decided to allow Iraq one final opportunity, as a pause of goodwill, until 15 January 1991 to resolve peacefully this crisis.

The United States strongly preferred a peaceful resolution of this crisis consistent with resolution 660 and the subsequent relevant resolutions. It has consistently supported diplomatic efforts since the outset of the crisis to achieve such a resolution. The United States, the European Community, the Arab League, the Non-Aligned Movement and numerous States and private individuals as well as the Secretary-General undertook extensive diplomatic efforts in order to reach such a solution.

President Saddam Hussein has rejected all of these efforts and has continued to defy the will of the Security Council and the community of nations. Economic sanctions have failed to force Iraq to comply with resolution 660 and the subsequent relevant resolutions. Iraq was continuing the destruction of Kuwait, its efforts to absorb Kuwait, and the strengthening of its military presence inside Kuwait. Further delay would only have prolonged the suffering of the Kuwaiti people and increased the risks to the military forces of the United States and other States co-operating with the Government of Kuwait.

Accordingly, pursuant to resolution 678, the military forces of the United States and other States co-operating with the Government of Kuwait initiated military action at 1900 (Eastern Standard Time) on 16 January 1991 to liberate Kuwait, restore the legitimate Government of Kuwait, and restore international peace and security in the area consistent with resolution 660 and the subsequent relevant resolutions.

The military actions initiated by the United States and other States co-operating with the Government of Kuwait are being carried out in full compliance with the applicable law of armed conflict. The purpose of these actions is the liberation of Kuwait, not the destruction, occupation or dismemberment of Iraq. They are directed strictly at military and strategic targets and every effort has been made to minimize civilian casualties. The United States hopes that these actions will be concluded as soon as possible consistent with the full implementation of resolution 660 and all subsequent relevant resolutions and the restoration of international peace and security in the area.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Thomas R. PICKERING